

LANDOWNER-LESSEE/SPORTSMAN RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Minutes of Regular Meeting

Thursday, July 25, 2013

Wild Horse Pass Casino and Conference Center - Chandler

Committee Members Present

Jim O'Haco, Livestock Grower
Darcy Ely, Livestock Grower
Steve Carmickle, Sportsmen Group
Pat Madden, Arizona Game and Fish Commission
Dan Rodriguez, Livestock Grower
Stephen Williams, Arizona State Land Department
Joe King, Livestock Grower
June Shoemaker, Bureau of Land Management
Sanford Cohen, OHV-Sportsmen Group
David Hoyle, Sportsmen Group
Tammy Pike, Tonto National Forest
Chris Mitchell, Sportsmen Group

Committee Members Absent

Peggy Ingham, Livestock Grower
Larry Audsley, Sportsmen Group

Others Present

Ana Kennedy, Arizona Farm Bureau
Christy Davis, Arizona Farm Bureau
Bob Broscheid, Special Assistant to the Director, AGFD
Reuben Teran, Big Game Habitat Specialist, AGFD
Ben Alteneder, Ombudsman, AGFD
Jim and Sue Chilton, Livestock Growers
Duane Coleman, Livestock Grower
Mike Gross, Livestock Grower
Stephanie Smallhouse, Livestock Grower
Walter Meyer, Livestock Growers
Jay Whetten, Livestock Grower
Jesse Davis, Livestock Grower
Pamela Griffin, Livestock Grower
Jeff Homack, Livestock Growers
Tina Thompson, Livestock Grower
David Thompson, Livestock Grower
Brent Cline, Livestock Grower
Mark Weise, Development Branch Chief, AGFD
Al Eiden, Landowner Relations Program Manager, AGFD
Andy Clark, Landowner Relations Program, AGFD
Dean Pokrajac, Landowner Relations Program, AGFD
Troy Christensen, Landowner Relations Program, AGFD

Meeting Notes

The Landowner-Lessee/Sportsman Relations Committee (Committee) meeting was called to order at 10:07 a.m.

Governor's Natural Resources Review Council

Bob Broscheid provided information on the Arizona Natural Resources Review Council (NRRC), which the Governor initiated through executive order. This council, which includes members from nine state agencies involved in natural resources, has the ability to provide a consistent message that includes input from all state natural resource agencies which should have a broader impact on federal land and resource management plans. Cross agency coordination will allow sound and timely response to actions on federal lands that will impact state resources and economics. The NRRC will prepare a comprehensive strategy for long-term natural resource management based on multiple use and sustained yield approaches, public access and sustainable economic development. The NRRC will identify and prioritize legal, legislative and incentive-based needs that protect and maintain state interests related to wildlife, land, water, and other natural resources. The NRRC will also provide recommendations to the Governor on a statewide approach to mitigation and conservation banking. Additional information is available on the web, visit http://www.azgfd.gov/inside_azgfd/natResRevCouncil.html

Commissioner's Comments and Update on Boquillas Ranch

Commissioner Pat Madden introduced himself and gave the committee details of his extensive background in law enforcement and northern Arizona issues.

Commissioner Madden provided an update on decisions made by the Big Boquillas Ranch regarding access to the ranch for the upcoming 2013 fall hunting season. These changes include implementation by the ranch operator of new "Ranch Rules" that charge a \$60 recreational impact fee for most adults. The funds raised will be used for infrastructure maintenance and habitat restoration. The Ranch Rules also address vehicular access, use of blinds, hunting in the vicinity of livestock waters, and other practices related to hunting on a working ranch. Everyone entering the ranch will be under the same rules and have the same opportunity for access. The Department has been working diligently to maintain hunting access to private lands on the Big Boquillas Ranch. Concerns expressed by the ranch operator about behavior exhibited by some recreational users of the ranch led to their questioning continued access in 2012. The Department, Cholla Livestock LLC, and the Navajo Nation, which is the private landowner for the ranch, will continue to work toward a signed agreement that will ensure access is available into the future and that the Ranch Rules remain reasonable for our constituents. For more information, including the Ranch Rules, visit www.huntbigboranch.com. The Committee discussed how this system on the Big Boquillas Ranch might affect neighboring ranches and access agreements.

Ben Alteneder provided the Committee with information on proposed changes to Arizona's hunting and fishing license structure and fees. Since the time of this meeting,

the public comment period has ended and the changes have been approved by the Arizona Game and Fish Commission. The recently approved changes, which will go into effect beginning in 2014, include a simplified structure, bundled privileges for some products, licenses being valid for one year from the date of purchase instead of just for the calendar year, a reduced-price youth license, and changes in license and tag prices. [View the summary sheet for the new 2014 license structure and license/tag fees](#)

Updates from Land Management Agencies

June Shoemaker, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), informed the Committee of the progress on various Travel Management and Resource Management Plans. She also told the Committee about the BLM partnering with the Arizona Department of Corrections on a program to make wild horses and burros more attractive for adoption by the public.

Stephen Williams, Arizona State Land Department (ASLD), reported his agency is working with the BLM and the Willow Springs Ranch, near Oracle, in order to manage the heavy recreational use on the ranch. Mr. Williams answered questions and provided information about State Land Recreational Use Permits.

Tammy Pike, U.S. Forest Service, provided information Tami Emmett had given her regarding a Travel Management Plan (TMP) and two new permanent access easements in the Coronado National Forest, one on Frye Mesa and another on the 76 Ranch. Ms. Pike then provided information about the Tonto National Forest's work on a TMP and progress on reopening access in the Cave Creek Burn area.

AGFD, Landowner Relations Program Updates

Al Eiden, Landowner Relations Program (LRP), informed the Committee about two regional LRP specialists being brought on to fill vacant positions in an effort to contact more ranches and create new partnerships – Chip Young (480-204-4039) will work in Game and Fish Regions 4 and 6, Rana Tucker (520-888-4471) will work in Region 5. Mr. Eiden said that the increase in Pitman-Robertson funds from the recent increased sales of firearms and ammunition would result in additional funds for LRP to use for on-the-ground projects. He told the Committee about how a grant from Yamaha was used to assist with the purchase of the permanent access agreement on Frye Mesa, and also about how a “floating” easement was being tried on the 76 Ranch in order to increase flexibility for completing that project.

Habitat Partnership Committee Program

Reuben Teran gave a presentation on the Arizona Habitat Partnership Committee (AHPC). The AHPC was established in 1992 to address and reduce elk-livestock conflicts. The AHPC has evolved and now collaborates on 70–100 projects annually that are intended to benefit many wildlife species. Projects are selected through an application process that has an annual deadline of September 1st. Funding is obtained through the Special Big Game License Tags (SBGLT) sold or auctioned by sponsoring wildlife conservation organizations. The SBGLT are expected to raise close to two million dollars in 2013, which will be used to fund various AHPC projects including

water projects, prescribed burns, brush management, fence work, etc. The twelve local Habitat Partnership Committees which are located in various parts of the state are open to everyone. Information regarding the local committee meetings, as well as, general AHPC information can be found at www.azgfd.gov/w_c/hpc.shtml

OHV Community Efforts

Steve Carmickle spoke of the large number of OHV's in the state and of the significant economic impact they have statewide. He talked about some of the resources which the OHV organizations offer to help ranchers address problems they are having due to OHV's. Mr. Carmickle spoke of recent improvements being made in OHV education and enforcement. The AGFD currently has nine officers who are strictly for OHV enforcement, and efforts are being made to get four more. Updated copies of the OHV rules and regulations brochure were provided to those present. Furthermore, Mr. Carmickle said there were plans to e-mail the Arizona Cattle Grower Association members some information, which would include a directory of contact numbers for OHV enforcement and also contacts for OHV organizations which might be able to provide volunteer assistance.

Identification of Current Issues and Possible Solutions

Joe King mentioned that a LRP sign-in box placed on the King's Anvil private land had helped to make recreationists act more responsibly while on their ranch. He then started a discussion to see if anyone had ideas to improve recreationists' ethics on public lands. Tammy Pike mentioned the work the Arizona OHV Ambassadors do and then there was discussion about how other groups also could possibly help with self-policing efforts. Al Eiden said he was looking into using volunteers to do some ethics education work on a couple of ranches during the elk hunts – he offered to give an update on that at the next Committee meeting.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held in conjunction with the "Meet the AGF Commission Event" on January 11, 2014. It will be at the Game and Fish Department Headquarters in Phoenix. Joe King will be the new Committee chairman.

Action Items:

1. At the January LLSRC meeting, provide an update on how things went with the volunteer ethics education during the elk hunts (LRP staff)
2. Meeting minutes distributed (LRP staff)
3. Coordinate next meeting and inform Committee (LRP staff)
4. Committee discussion/vote on new Committee Co-Chair at January meeting